

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) ~~Selected~~ A selected lactic bacterial strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus or Pediococcus, ~~which said strain has~~ having the capability of effecting the conversion of malic acid into lactic acid, ~~said bacterium being characterised in that,~~

~~when it is introduced at~~ wherein,

when said strain introduced at a concentration of between 10^6 and $5 \cdot 10^7$ UFC/ml, directly in ~~[[the]]~~ a dried, freeze-dried or frozen state, into a wine which has an alcohol degree of 10 % or more and a pH greater than or equal to 3.5 ~~[[,]]:~~

i) ~~[[it]]~~ said strain converts at least 5% ~~, and preferably at least 10 %, of the~~ of malic acid into lactic acid in said wine in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and

ii) ~~[[it]]~~ said strain converts at least 10 %, ~~and preferably at least 25 %, of the~~ of malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

2. (currently amended) ~~Lactie~~ The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, ~~characterised in that, when it is~~ wherein when said strain is introduced at a concentration of between 10^6 and $5 \cdot 10^7$ UFC/ml, directly in ~~[[the]]~~ a dried, freeze-dried or frozen state, into a wine which has an alcohol degree of 10 % or more and a pH greater than or equal to 3.6~~[[,]]~~:

iii) ~~[[it]]~~ said strain converts at least 10 %, ~~and preferably at least 15 %, of the~~ of malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and

iv) ~~[[it]]~~ said strain converts at least 25 %, ~~and preferably at least 40 %, of the~~ of malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

3. (currently amended) ~~Lactie~~ The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, ~~characterised in that it~~ wherein said strain is homofermentary.

4. (currently amended) ~~Malolactie~~ The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, ~~possessing in addition~~ one or more of the following characteristics wherein said

strain possesses at least one characteristic selected from the group consisting of:

- [[it]] said strain does not produce biogenic amine from [[the]] aminated precursors,
- [[it]] said strain does not degrade [[the]] glycerol, and
- [[it]] said strain does not degrade [[the]] tartaric acid.

5. (currently amended) ~~Lactic~~ The lactic bacterial strain according to claim [[4]]1, ~~characterised in that it~~ wherein said strain has the capability, when [[it]] said strain is introduced directly at a concentration of $2 \cdot 10^6$ UFC/ml into a wine at a temperature greater than or equal to 18° C, having an SO₂ content of between 0 and 15 mg/l, an alcohol content greater than or equal to 10 % and a pH of 3.7 or more,

- i) of converting 15 % of [[the]] malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 5 days after inoculation of said wine, and
- ii) of converting 40 % of [[the]] malic acid in said wine into lactic acid in 10 days after inoculation of said wine.

6. (currently amended) ~~Lactic~~ The lactic bacterial

strain according to claim [[4]]1, ~~characterised in that it~~
wherein said strain has the capability, when [[it]] said
strain is introduced directly at a concentration of 2.10^6
UFC/ml into a wine at a temperature greater than or equal to
18° C, having an SO₂ content of between 0 and 15 mg/l, an
alcohol content greater than or equal to 10 % and a pH of 3.7
or more,

i) of converting 50 % of [[the]] malic
acid in said wine into lactic acid in 5 days after
inoculation of said wine, and

ii) of converting 80 % of [[the]] malic
acid in said wine into lactic acid in 10 days after
inoculation of said wine.

7. (currently amended) ~~Malolactie~~ The lactic
bacterial strain according to claim 1, selected from the group
~~formed from~~ consisting of *Lactobacillus plantarum*,
Lactobacillus casei, *Lactobacillus delbrückii*, *Pediococcus*
acidilactici, *Pediococcus damnceus*, *Pediococcus pentosaceus*,
Pediococcus parvulus, and *Pediococcus cerevisiae*.

8. (currently amended) ~~Malolactie~~ The lactic
bacterial strain according to claim 7, selected from the group
~~composed~~ consisting of *Lactobacillus plantarum* DSM-9916, CNCM
I-2924 and *Pediococcus acidilactici* CNCM MA 18/5M.

9-17. (canceled)

18. (new) The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, wherein said strain coverts at least 10% of said malic acid to lactic acid in said 5 days.

19. (new) The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 1, wherein said strain coverts at least 25% of said malic acid to lactic acid in said 10 days.

20. (new) The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 2, wherein said strain coverts at least 15% of said malic acid to lactic acid in said 5 days.

21. (new) The lactic bacterial strain according to claim 2, wherein said strain coverts at least 40% of said malic acid to lactic acid in said 10 days.